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## The Land Use Regulation Commission

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### Introduction

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The Maine Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC or the Commission) was created by the Maine Legislature in 1971 to serve as the planning and zoning authority for the state's plantations and unorganized areas<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission was established primarily in response to a recreational building and land development boom in these areas during the late 1960's. Its purpose in these areas is to extend the principles of planning and zoning; to preserve public health, safety, and welfare; to encourage the well-planned, multiple use of natural resources; to promote orderly development; and to protect natural and ecological values. The Commission has land use regulatory jurisdiction over these areas because they have no form of local government to administer land use controls or, if they have local government, they choose not to administer land use controls at the local level. The jurisdiction is a diverse area which includes several coastal islands and stretches from the downeast across to the western mountains and up to the Canadian border. This area encompasses more than 10.4 million acres, over half the state.

While the more undeveloped portion of the jurisdiction is often referred to as wilderness by recreationists or those promoting recreation in the jurisdiction, this area is not wilderness by strict definition. To visitors, much of this area may seem like wilderness compared to most of the rest of the Northeast. For those living or working in or near the mainland portion of the jurisdiction, however, log-

ging roads and active timber harvesting clearly identify the region as a managed forest important to the forestry industry and segments of the recreation industry in the state. Historically, much of this area has been referred to as the "wildlands" or the "North Woods" of Maine.

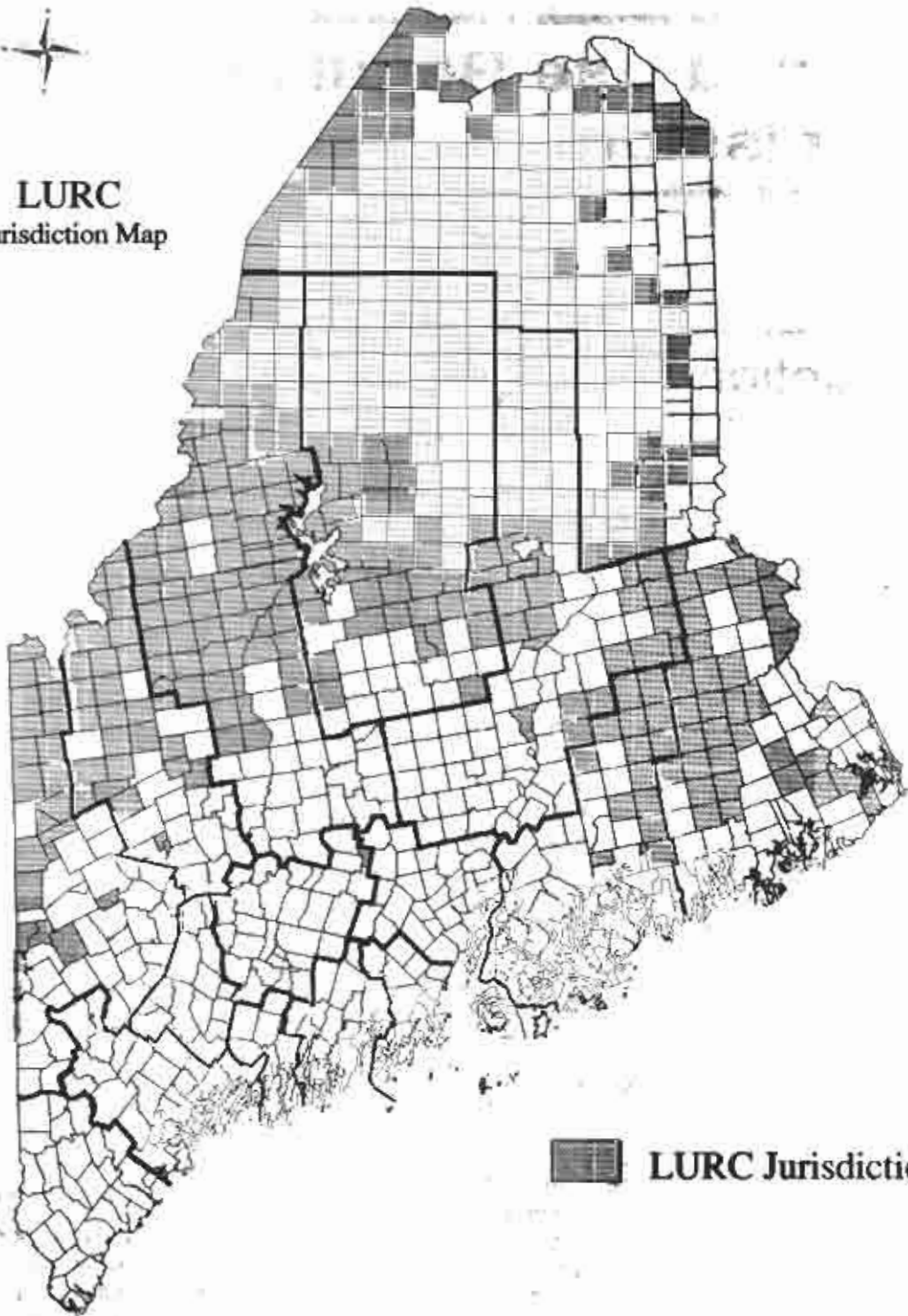
In 1971, and still today, the responsibility of guiding land use in these areas represents a unique challenge. The jurisdiction encompasses the largest, contiguous undeveloped area in the Northeast. The most striking features of the area are the forest – diverse in appearance because it is so actively managed for timber – and the general absence of development. The natural world dominates the region, and the landscape is made intriguing by high mountains, pristine lakes and streams, wetlands, and abundant wildlife. Settled areas, and many of the conveniences of modern life, are generally a long distance away. While the area has an extensive private land management road network, it has few public roads and is sparsely populated. Most development is concentrated along the fringe of the jurisdiction, adjacent to more populous areas where services are more accessible.

The North Woods have always possessed a powerful mystique. Residents and visitors alike place a premium on the natural values they find there. Even those who never visit the area value its uniqueness and consider it part of the state's identity.

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<sup>1</sup>The Commission's jurisdiction now includes several towns which have organized and chosen not to assume local land use controls and, thus, remain within the Commission's jurisdiction.

**LURC**  
Jurisdiction Map



*Commission Meeting*

## Structure and Function of the Commission

### The Commission and Staff

The Commission is a seven-member, independent board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature. While administratively, LURC is a bureau within the Department of Conservation, under the law the Commission has independent policy- and decision-making authority. The Commission has ultimate responsibility for rules, adjudications, policies and other agency decisions. These responsibilities include considering and adopting new rules and amendments to the comprehensive plan, acting on zoning petitions and important permit applications, acting as an appellate board to hear appeals of staff decisions on more routine permit applications, ratifying the administrative resolution of enforcement actions, and setting other agency policies. The Commission meets monthly to consider business pending before it, and holds public hearings as needed.

Commission members hold staggered, four-year terms. Each of four members of the Commission must be knowledgeable in one of the following fields: forestry, fish and wildlife, commerce and industry, and conservation. At least two Commission members must be residents of the Commission's jurisdiction.

A small staff carries out administrative, operational, and other functions of the Commission. As the primary instrument of the Commission, the staff carries out its responsibilities guided by the Commission's policies. The staff operates under the supervision and oversight of a Director, who is appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation with the approval of the LURC Commission members. The Director acts on routine permit applications delegated to staff by the Commission, and is responsible for staff recommendations to the Commission on matters that



come before it. While the Director reports and is responsible to the Commission in executing the Commission's policy decisions, the Director also reports and is responsible to the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation in connection with administrative matters affecting the agency. On those matters where these responsibilities may overlap, the Director provides a bridge of communication between the Commission and the Commissioner of the Department, and keeps the Commissioner informed concerning the Commission's work.

The staff of the agency is organized into two operational divisions: Planning and Administration, and Permitting and Compliance. Planning and Administration is staffed by the Division Manager, a resource administrator, several planners, and clerical staff. This division coordinates the development of overall land use policy for the jurisdiction and provides primary administrative support to the Commission and the staff, including scheduling Commission meetings and hearings. Its responsibilities include advising the Commission on zoning approaches, tracking natural resource and other information, researching and analyzing issues, developing policies, revising and updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, zoning maps, and land use standards and other rules, and assisting in the review of major projects. The division also directs LURC's educational efforts, including public outreach workshops and publications, updates operational procedures, coordinates legislative activities, and frequently represents the Commission on interagency matters.

Much of the planning staff's work involves identifying and researching emerging issues and developing appropriate responses. Examples of this work include the innovative lake management program adopted in 1990, the deeryard study and associated program changes adopted in 1991, and comprehensive mining regulations adopted in 1992. The planners also oversee the preparation of resource plans which enable specialized management of unique features or resources and provide greater flexibility to landowners.

The Permitting and Compliance Division is staffed by the Division Manager, project analysts, and compliance officers. A primary function of the division is to process and review applications for the various types of development and rezoning activities that require a permit in LURC jurisdiction. The staff also provides on-site assistance, conducts inspections, and enforces LURC regulations through a program of compliance checks of

approved projects and regular monitoring of activity in the jurisdiction for potential violations. The Division staff processes over 1,000 applications each year, including applications for building permits, development permits (commercial and industrial development), subdivision permits, rezoning petitions, forestry permits, variance requests, and other specialized permits (e.g. hydropower, utility line, stream alteration). The staff is delegated the authority to approve or disapprove routine permit applications, but all rezoning changes and variance requests must be acted on by the Commission based on information provided by the staff.

The Commission has strengthened its commitment to facilitate its permitting and compliance activities by establishing a staff presence in regional offices to better serve applicants. It now has a total of six regional offices located in Ashland, Greenville, Jonesboro, Millinocket, Rangeley and Moscow. Each office is staffed by a compliance officer, who is joined regularly by a project analyst during the building season. The Permitting and Compliance Division also carries out educational activities, including training contractors, loggers, and others in appropriate land use practices.

## Commission Responsibilities and Regulatory Framework

The Land Use Regulation Law, the Commission's enabling statute, directs the Commission to plan, zone, implement land use standards, review permits, and carry out associated responsibilities. In practice, the Commission is similar to a local planning board except that the area of its responsibility is vast in comparison to municipalities. In essence, it plans regionally and implements locally.

In accordance with its enabling statute, the Commission has established zoning districts, many of which are resource-based, to protect important resources and prevent conflicts between incompatible uses. These zoning districts identify what types of activities are appropriate and allowed in each zone.

Zones are grouped into three general categories: Management zones, Protection zones, and Development zones. Management zones are applied to areas which are appropriate for commercial forest product or agricultural uses and for which future development is not anticipated.

Protection zones are applied to areas where land use activities may jeopardize significant natural, recreational, or historical resources. Development zones are applied to areas having patterns of intensive residential, recreational, commercial, or

industrial use, including commercial removal of minerals or other natural resources, and areas identified as appropriate for designation as development districts. The Commission has established five Development Subdistricts, three Management

## **Protection Zones:**

<b>Wetland Zone (P-WL)</b>	<b>Encompasses all submerged lands and other areas meeting wetland criteria.</b>
<b>Great Pond Zone (P-GP)</b>	<b>Applies to a 250 foot wide strip around all lakes and ponds greater than 10 acres in size.</b>
<b>Wildlife Habitat Zone (P-FW)</b>	<b>Covers important deer winter shelter areas, coastal seabird nesting sites and other significant fisheries and wildlife habitat.</b>
<b>High Mountain Area Zone (P-MA)</b>	<b>Covers all mountainous areas above 2,700 feet elevation.</b>
<b>Recreation Zone (P-RR)</b>	<b>Covers areas along existing hiking trails and significant canoeing rivers as well as around unspoiled, remote fishing ponds and other areas of recreational significance.</b>
<b>Soils and Geology Zone (P-SG)</b>	<b>Covers areas of steep slopes and unstable soils.</b>
<b>Flood Prone Zone (P-FP)</b>	<b>Covers areas within the 100 year frequency flood.</b>
<b>Aquifer Zone (P-AR)</b>	<b>Covers important ground water resources.</b>
<b>Unusual Area Zone (P-UA)</b>	<b>Applies to unusually significant scenic, historic, scientific, recreational and natural areas not adequately protected by other zoning.</b>
<b>Resource Plan Zone (P-RP)</b>	<b>Permits landowners to develop their own resource management plan for an area and, if approved by the Commission, allows land use activities in accordance with such plan.</b>
<b>Shoreland Zone (P-SL)</b>	<b>Protects shorelands of rivers and streams, ocean, and small ponds.</b>
<b>Special River Transition Zone (P-RT)</b>	<b>Applies to developed shorelines on outstanding river segments in areas of the jurisdiction adjacent to organized towns.</b>
<b>Accessible Lake Zone (P-AL)</b>	<b>Protects accessible, undeveloped, high value lakes.</b>

### **Development Zones:**

**Residential Development  
Zone (D-RS)**

**Covers areas around existing patterns of  
residential development.**

**General Development Zone  
(D-GN)**

**Covers areas around existing patterns of  
mixed, residential and small scale, commercial  
development.**

**Commercial and Industrial  
Development Zone (D-CI)**

**Covers areas around existing patterns of  
major commercial or industrial development.**

**Planned Development Zone  
(D-PD)**

**Provides for special planned developments.**

**Maritime Development  
Zone (D-MT)**

**Provides for working waterfronts in coastal  
communities.**

### **Management Zones:**

**General Management (M-GN)**

**Covers the residual of LURC jurisdiction, where for-  
est and agricultural activities are allowed and  
encouraged without significant restriction.**

**Highly Productive  
Management (M-HP)**

**Identifies highly productive agricultural or forest  
lands.**

**Natural Character  
Management (M-NC)**

**Maintains large areas for forestry and primitive  
recreation with minimal development.**





Subdistricts, and 13 Protection Subdistricts, listed and described in the preceeding table.

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Interim zoning was first established for areas in LURC jurisdiction during the 1970's. Permanent zoning maps were finalized and adopted between the late 1970's and early 1980's. Today, the Commission administers a land use zoning program for 450 townships, plantations, and organized towns and 306 coastal islands. Approximately 18% of the jurisdiction lies in Protection Subdistricts, 2% in Development Subdistricts, and 80% in Management Subdistricts.

The Commission has established standards to ensure that land uses and development will not have an undue adverse effect on resources and existing uses. These standards, first adopted in 1977, address considerations such as minimum lot size, building setbacks from water, timber harvesting practices near waterbodies, and clearing of vegetation in the shoreland zone. LURC's zones and land use standards are contained in Chapter 10 of the Commission's regulations, Land Use Districts and Standards.

The zones and land use standards are administered principally through permit review and notification procedures. Permit review is the process of reviewing a proposed activity to ensure that it meets the Commission's zoning and land use standards. The LURC statute stipulates that all development activities require a permit unless expressly exempted by statute or LURC regulations. The Commission reviews over 1,000 permit applications every year, including permits to build individual camps, create subdivisions, and construct large, commercial developments. Notification procedures apply to certain land management activities, such as timber harvesting, which may be conducted without a permit provided notice is given to the Commission and certain standards are followed. The Commission receives approximately 1,200 notifications each year.

The zones and land use standards are the primary mechanism for implementing the Commission's broad goals and policies. These goals and policies, and much of the information on which they are based, are contained in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Commission's primary policy document.

Zoning, land use standards, and the permit review process are the primary tools provided to the Commission by the legislature for carrying out its statutory mandate. These tools are accepted as

a reasonable and appropriate means of protecting the public interest and guiding growth and development.

The Commission recognizes that these regulatory tools can affect land value, both positively and negatively. The Commission is committed to exercise its authority fairly and responsibly, and to consider the interests of the landowner within the framework provided by its legal mandate. There may be disagreements about the reasonableness and fairness of specific regulatory actions, but the Commission is committed to considering all sides of these issues.

The Commission complements its regulatory program with efforts to educate the public about appropriate, well-planned uses of land. Toward this end, the Commission conducts outreach workshops and develops and distributes publications about its programs.

## Landowner Initiatives and Cooperative Efforts

Of necessity, in its early years the Commission focused on setting up appropriate regulatory programs in accordance with its statutory mandate. Nevertheless, it has always recognized the value of cooperative approaches to the protection of important resources and values, and has provided opportunities for such cooperation.

Over the years, numerous landowners have utilized the Resource Plan Protection Subdistrict (a landowner-initiated zone) as a more flexible alternative to LURC's traditional zoning framework. During the 1980's, several major landowners cooperated with the Commission on a small streams mapping project to improve the accuracy of LURC zoning maps. In the early 1990's, a number of landowners developed or considered landowner-initiated concept plans that address the long-range development and conservation of a large block of land in a manner that accomplishes both Commission and landowner objectives.

The Commission recognizes that many actions taken by landowners advance its objectives. Examples include the following:

- Great Northern Paper, Inc. has several "remote recreation areas" where recreational vehicular access is limited to maintain traditional uses and remote character. For



example, a large area comprising about 50,000 acres and 30 lakes and ponds in the Debsconeag Lakes region is managed as a remote recreation area.

- Project SHARE, a voluntary association of landowners, businesses, government officials, educators, and conservation organizations, takes actions which conserve or enhance Atlantic Salmon habitat and populations in the Downeast region of Maine.
- Several major landowners have developed long-term management agreements with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, establishing protection for deer wintering areas that goes well beyond areas protected by the Commission's zoning.
- A large tract in the Rangeley area was protected from development but retained for timber production and other purposes by selling the development rights under the federal Forest Legacy Program.

Many other examples of cooperative, nonregulatory initiatives exist. The Commission strongly encourages landowners to take advantage of the flexibility and creativity available through nonregulatory measures as well as optional regulatory tools such as concept plans.

## The Commission's Constituency

The Commission differs from a local planning board in that its jurisdiction extends over multiple townships, plantations and towns. In organized communities, planning boards are ultimately responsible to the town's legislative body – usually either town meeting or municipal councils. The Commission, on the other hand, is ultimately responsible to the people through their legislators and governor.

The powers and functions given to LURC under state statute are declared to be "in the public interest, and for the public benefit and the good order of the people of this state." The statute charges the Commission with "encouraging appropriate use of these lands by residents of Maine and visitors, in pursuit of outdoor recreational activities..."

In light of this statutory language, the Commission has historically viewed its constituency broadly. In making land use decisions affecting particular communities, the Commission strives to be sensitive to the concerns of local residents. But this is not its sole constituency. Many property owners within the Commission's jurisdiction do not actually reside there. Residents of organized areas



*St. John River Resource Plan Advisory Committee, Annual River Trip, 1997*

may work in the jurisdiction, or have economic ties to the region and its resources. The recreating public also has a strong interest in the jurisdiction. In public forums concerning planning, zoning and permitting, the Commission strives to balance the concerns of these various constituencies.

## **LURC's Relationship to State Agencies and Other Governmental Entities**

The Maine Land Use Regulation Commission is the primary agency responsible for land use planning and resource protection within its jurisdiction, but several other state agencies administer statutes which deal, directly or indirectly, with land and resource use throughout the state. A number of agencies have limited jurisdiction over specific resources or types of land use in LURC jurisdiction. In most cases, their responsibilities are distinctly different from LURC's responsibilities.

### **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:**

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers a broad range of environmental protection and pollution control regulations governing activities that affect natural resources. DEP's Bureau of Land and Water Quality administers the Site Location of Development Law and the Natural Resources Protection Act which, under some circumstances, apply to activities and lands within the Commission's jurisdiction.

Although DEP is responsible for reviewing specified large projects elsewhere in the state, in LURC jurisdiction, DEP authority under the Site Location Law is limited to metallic mineral mining, for which DEP and LURC jointly administer specialized rules.

The Maine Waterway Development and Conservation Act authorizes a single permit for hydropower projects. LURC or DEP is the permitting agency, including water quality certification, for proposed hydropower projects located wholly within the area of each agency's jurisdiction the permitting agency is determined on a case-by-case basis where a proposed project overlaps both jurisdictions. DEP issues water quality certifications for federal relicensing permits for existing dams in the state, including such permits within the Commission's jurisdiction.

The Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) directs DEP to protect significant natural resources such as rivers, lakes, fragile mountain areas, wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, and coastal sand dunes. This responsibility originally extended to all activities, statewide, which had the potential to adversely affect significant natural resources. However, under direction from the Legislature, the Commission must review and revise its standards to make them consistent with NRPA so that activities in the Commission's jurisdiction will be exempted from that Act.

The Department of Environmental Protection is also responsible for setting water levels on dam-controlled lakes and ponds within the Commission's jurisdiction, except those permitted under the Maine Waterway Development and Conservation Act.

### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES:**

The Department of Human Services oversees the administration of a statewide plumbing code. LURC is not involved in the administration of the plumbing code, most of which is done by locally designated plumbing inspectors, but LURC staff usually check permit applications for consistency with plumbing code requirements. The Department of Human Services is also responsible for licensing all public water supply systems, defined as any system serving 25 or more people.

### **MAINE FOREST SERVICE:**

The Maine Forest Service administers the Forest Practices Act, which regulates certain aspects of timber harvesting practices. Under this program, the Forest Service monitors forest management activity through reporting requirements and administers standards for forest regeneration and clearcutting.

### **DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE:**

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) administers the Maine Endangered Species Act, which affects activities in certain locations in LURC jurisdiction. IF&W has mapped "essential habitat" – areas essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species. Any activity proposed in these areas that requires a permit or license from a state agency or municipality also requires a determination by IF&W that

the activity will not significantly alter or unreasonably harm the essential habitat.

Except for activities affecting essential habitat, IF&W generally functions as an advisor to LURC, providing technical assistance to the Commission but having no permitting authority itself. IF&W supplies LURC with information about the location of important wildlife and fisheries habitat, including deer wintering areas, coastal nesting sites, and remote ponds, so that the Commission can consider them for protective zoning. IF&W also reviews permit applications upon request, evaluating whether proposed activities may adversely affect fisheries or wildlife, and submitting comments and recommendations to the Commission.

#### OTHER AGENCIES:

A number of agencies, including IF&W, serve as "review agencies" for permit applications. These agencies review permit applications for impacts based on their area of expertise. For example, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission evaluates impacts on historical and archaeological sites, DEP assesses the impact of large subdivisions on lake water quality, and the State Soil Scientist evaluates erosion control measures and soil suitability. The comments and recommendations of these agencies are advisory. Ultimately, the Commission considers the information and makes a decision as to the significance of natural and cultural resources and the impact proposed activities will have on them.

County and local governments also review permit applications for projects proposed within their jurisdictions. County Commissioners and town and plantation officials generally evaluate proposals for potential impacts on regional or local facilities and services.

Federal involvement in land use regulation within the jurisdiction is limited mainly to Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction over wetlands. The state is also participating in an on-going federal effort to control nonpoint source pollution. In Maine, this effort is coordinated by the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Planning Office. The main focus of this effort is development and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) for activities which generate nonpoint source pollution, such as agriculture, forestry, and development. The BMPs are advisory.

## The Commission – Past, Present and Future

Since its creation in 1971, the Commission has accomplished a great deal:

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Over 500 zoning maps, covering 10.4 million acres, have been created for the 450 townships, towns, and plantations within LURC jurisdiction. New zoning maps are currently being developed from improved base maps.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan, first adopted in the mid-1970's, establishes policies to guide the Commission's work. This 1997 document represents the third complete review and update of the plan and is designed to ensure that the Commission's policies are appropriate in the context of changing conditions and priorities.

The Land Use Districts and Standards, first adopted in 1977, contain the Commission's zoning and land use standards. This document has been revised periodically to improve the standards and to respond to the changing needs of the jurisdiction. In particular, extensive streamlining changes were made in 1988 with the intent of reducing the regulatory burden to landowners while maintaining a high level of environmental protection.

In the late 1970's, the Commission prepared six *Land Use Handbooks* aimed at educating the Maine public about land use planning and design. These handbooks won the Meritorious Program Award from the American Planning Association.

- In the early 1980's, the Commission developed guidelines for erosion control on forestry operations. These guidelines subsequently became the model for the best management practices for forestry that were developed for the entire state in 1995.
- In 1987, the Commission and DEP adopted joint hydropower regulations to facilitate administration of the Maine Waterway Development and Conservation Act.
- In 1988, LURC established regional offices, adding three more in the mid-1990's. There are now offices in Ashland, Greenville, Jonesboro, Millinocket, Rangeley, and Moscow. These offices dramatically improve

the Commission's ability to provide on-site assistance and ensure compliance with its standards, and create new educational opportunities.

A comprehensive lakes management program was developed following years of inventory and study of 1,500 lakes in LURC jurisdiction. In 1990, this program was implemented through adoption of a lake classification and management program designed to guide development to suitable lake locations and away from inappropriate locations. Legislation was subsequently passed in 1992 establishing the Great Pond Task Force. Among its charges was a directive to develop a great pond classification system for the rest of the state which was to be consistent with the Commission's classification system.

A comprehensive review of the deer wintering area program was completed and changes to the program were adopted in 1991. The fundamental structure and function of the program was unaltered, but the program was improved by defining its scope and improving the basis for decision-making.

In 1991, comprehensive metallic mineral mining rules were adopted jointly with DEP. They included technical rules pertaining to exploration and mining activities and revisions to the Standards which allow the rezoning of areas associated with mining activities.

In 1992, *A Guide to Creative Site Planning in the Unorganized Areas of Maine* was prepared to provide pre-application guidance on site/development design to those persons who intend to subdivide and develop land in the Commission's jurisdiction.

A number of special resource protection plans have been developed jointly with landowners to both meet the resource protection objectives of the Commission and provide a maximum amount of land management flexibility for landowners. These include resource plans for Dix Island (1977), Hewett Island (1978), Penobscot River (1981), St. John River (1982, renewed 1992), White Mountain National Forest (1982, renewed 1992), and Metinic Island (1992, 1994).

In 1993, the first concept plan was approved for a 17,000-acre area in Attean Township and Dennistown Plantation. This plan received the planning project of the year

award from the Maine Association of Planners. The concept plan is an innovation that fulfills the Commission's goals of encouraging landowner-initiated, long-range, natural resource-based planning as an alternative to incremental development.

- Planning assistance has been provided to 10 plantations or towns that were originally within the Commission's jurisdiction so that they could prepare their own plans and regulations to be administered locally. The Commission also worked with residents of the deorganized towns of Benedicta and Greenfield to prepare zoning maps for these townships when they entered the Commission's jurisdiction. The maps serve as the basis for Commission decision making in those townships.
- Planning assistance was also provided to Monhegan Plantation in 1991 to prepare a land use and natural resource inventory and analysis report to assist the Commission and Plantation officials in carrying out their respective responsibilities for that community. Commission staff also assisted Monhegan in applying for and receiving a grant to improve public facilities on the Island.
- In 1994, the Commission developed conservation easement holder guidelines and a model conservation easement to serve as the basis for easements that may come before the Commission for approval as part of regulatory actions.
- Each year, the Commission has acted upon hundreds of applications for development and other land use activities, approving the vast majority (over 90%). These permits are often approved with special conditions to prevent environmental degradation.

As evidenced by its history of accomplishment, the Commission's focus has shifted over the years in response to changing needs and new challenges. In its first decade, the Commission developed a planning and zoning framework for the unorganized areas, implemented interim zoning over its jurisdiction, and established its major natural resource and development policies. In its second decade, with its regulatory framework in place, the Commission turned to fine-tuning its standards and addressing emerging issues. The major issues of this period were the spruce budworm outbreak, debate over conservation versus



use of rivers, and, in the latter years, significant changes in the amount and nature of development activity occurring in the jurisdiction.

The surge in development activity associated with the land and real estate boom of the late 1980's commanded the Commission's attention in the early 1990's. Even though the real estate boom has subsided, it highlighted changes in the forces affecting land and resource use in the region since the Commission was created in 1971. Demand for residential development is continuing at a steady rate, corporate priorities and forestry operations are changing, and land ownership patterns are shifting.

An unprecedented amount of forestland changed hands during this period. These land transactions were especially of concern because they came at a time when forestland was being viewed, for the first time, as an increasingly valuable commodity for nonforestry uses. Even though much of the acreage remained in forestry use, the

growing volume of land transactions and increase in use of land for development rather than forestry purposes shook the traditional vision of the region as one of stable ownership and land use patterns.

The jurisdiction has experienced periods of active land trading and speculation in the past, but these transactions always involved large parcels of land, the future use of which was not limited or pre-disposed by size. The real estate boom of the late 1980's included many smaller parcels, use of which is more limited, with significant implications for future land use patterns.

The 1980's indicated that there is a high level of interest in land and housing in remote regions of the state. This interest has continued to manifest itself in the form of continued development proposals into the 1990's. The Commission's review of development proposals in the early 1990's has been dominated by questions of appropriateness in terms of location, scale, and relation to existing uses and resources.

